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April 9, 2002
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NEWS RELEASE

FRIDAY, APRIL 12: UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON CAMPUS TO HOLD "PORCH PARTY" TO SALUTE PRESIDENCY OF BROTHER RAY FITZ

As the spring term winds to an end, University of Dayton faculty, staff, students and retirees will celebrate the presidency of Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., during a "porch party" at 3:45 p.m. on Friday, April 12, in the Thomas J. Frericks Center.

A "parade" of 30 departments, divisions and student groups will pay both serious and lighthearted homage to Fitz, who will enjoy the festivities from a specially designed porch. At UD, porches are symbolic of the Marianist sense of community. Children from UD's Bombeck Family Learning Center will join Fitz on the porch to witness the parade, which will be led by Rudy Flyer and UD's pep band.

Shh! Some of the surprise tributes will include: a lunch-for-life card from dining services, a treatment plan for separation anxiety from the counseling center and a key to the Marian Library (home of the world's largest collection of printed material about Mary, the mother of Jesus). Engineers and scientists from the University of Dayton Research Institute, clad in lab coats and carrying beakers, are expected to parade past Fitz with a specially designed airplane and cannon that shoots out a fake bird. UDRI is internationally renowned for its bird-strike research. The staff from facilities management will bring up the rear of the parade with a broom to clean up the confetti.

Student musical groups will perform short selections, and tributes from faculty, staff and students will be read. At the end of the parade, Fitz is expected to make a few remarks and hand over a "baton" to Daniel J. Curran, who starts his stint as president on July 1. When Curran's presidency was announced in February, Fitz quipped, "When you're sprinting with the baton, it's nice to see someone (waiting)."

The campus celebration is the second of three special events in April honoring Fitz. Several hundred attended a Mass of Thanksgiving at Holy Angels Church on Sunday, April 7. The Dayton community will honor Fitz at a 6 p.m. "Celebration of Community" tribute dinner on Wednesday, April 24, in the Thomas J. Frericks Center. Ronald Heifetz, director of Harvard University's Leadership Education Project, author of *Leadership Without Easy Answers* and one of Fitz's champions, will offer remarks, and community leaders will present \$1 million to Fitz to help endow UD's new Center for Leadership in Community and name it after him. Fitz will return to campus in January to work in the center and teach courses.

Fitz steps down on June 30 after a record 23-year stint as UD's president. In May, he will award diplomas to the class of 2002. More than half of UD's 86,000 living alumni have received their degrees from Fitz, the youngest president to ever lead UD.

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